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NOTES AND NEWS.

THE SVERDRUP EXPEDITION.—The *Geographical Journal*, for February, 1899, prints an account of the objects and equipment of Captain Sverdrup's expedition in the *Fram* to the north coast of Greenland.

It is stated in a foot-note that the account has been forwarded to the President (of the Royal Geographical Society) by Consul Axel Heiberg and MM. Amund and Ellef Ringnes, who contributed handsomely to Dr. Nansen's expedition, and who are generously bearing the entire expense of the present expedition in the *Fram*, the ship itself being provided by the Norwegian Government.

The objects of the expedition are thus set forth in this first official account:

It is the intention of Captain Sverdrup, with the aid of this ship, to force his way through Smith Sound and Robeson Channel as far north along the coast of Greenland as possible. Should it prove possible to take the *Fram* round the northern coast of Greenland and over to its eastern shores, this will be done, but the expedition did not base any positive calculations on this remote possibility. When the *Fram* has been forced as far north as the conditions will permit, the ship is to serve as headquarters for sledge expeditions for further exploration.

The principal purpose of these expeditions will be to explore and map out the northern mainland coastline, and to make an attempt to connect Cape Washington, the most northerly point known on the west coast of Greenland, with Independence Bay and Cape Bismarck, the extreme northern points on the east coast. In case such an expedition should succeed, the Danish Government has, in Scoresby Sound on the east coast, generously placed at the disposal of the exploring party a depot of provisions left there by Lieut. Ryder's expedition, 1891-92. The explorers will here find a place of refuge where they can make their winter quarters, if they wish, in order later on to return or proceed southward to more civilized regions, as circumstances may render advisable. With the *Fram* as starting point, other sledge expeditions will be sent out to explore the archipelago which may exist north of Greenland, and to make other more special investigations. This is, in short, the geographical programme of the new Norwegian arctic expedition, so far as it can be approximately outlined in advance.

More than two years ago (on the 12th of January, 1897), Mr. Peary laid before the American Geographical Society his project of exploration in the Arctic, summed up by himself in these words:

The conquest of the North Pole, the complete delimitation of the Greenland archipelago, the last of the circumpolar island groups, and the elimination from our maps of the unknown area between the 84th parallel and the Pole are important geographical desiderata.

Mr. Peary's address, from which these words are taken, was

printed in full in the BULLETIN of this Society for 1897 (No. 1, pp. 116-121).

Capt. Sverdrup's plan, now revealed, is copied point by point, as if on tracing paper, from Mr. Peary's plan.

During the summer and autumn of 1897 there were repeated unofficial announcements of Captain Sverdrup's intended expedition, and Mr. Peary was moved to write to him, as follows:

BROOKLYN, N. Y., November 4th, 1897.

MY DEAR CAPTAIN,

Paragraphs and articles are appearing in the papers here to the effect that you intend going North with a party in the Fram next year, provisioned for several years, via the west coast of Greenland, Smith Sound, Robeson Channel, &c., with the intention of exploring the northwest coast of Greenland and attempting to reach the Pole.

As this is the very route and these objects the very ones proposed in detail by me to the American Geographical Society on the 12th of last January, and as my preparations for carrying out that project are already well advanced, these articles have created a distinctly disagreeable impression over here, and have caused and are causing such unpleasant reflections upon you that I am constrained to take this liberty of writing you and asking you to give me the authority to deny the statements.

With sincerest regards and the highest admiration for the masterly way in which you brought the Fram home, I am

Very sincerely,

R. E. PEARY,
Civil Engineer, U. S. N.

CAPTAIN OTTO SVERDRUP,
Christiania,
Norway.

Captain Sverdrup replied:

DEN 2DEN NORSKE POLARFAERD MED "FRAM"
LEDER: OTTO SVERDRUP

CHRISTIANIA, 7th Decbr. 1897.

MY DEAR LIEUTENANT.

I am in possession of your honored letter of the 4th p. Having been abroad I have not before now been able to give you an answer.

I beg to tell that you are in a mistake when you mean, that I intend to reach the pole. My expedition has only a scientific purpose and is going to make scientific explorations in the north of Greenland and to study the palæocrystical ice.

I take the liberty of congratulating you with your intention of reaching the pole by that way, which I do not think difficult.

I wish you good luck and remain, dear Sir,

Yours truly
OTTO SVERDRUP.

To this letter, written on paper which seems to affirm what the writer denies, Mr. Peary sent the following answer and with it the correspondence ceased:

U. S. M. S. "ST. PAUL."

December 25, '97.

DEAR SIR :

I received your favor of the 7th in London, but the continuous demands upon my time gave me no opportunity to answer it. I note that you state that you have no intentions to reach the pole.

I still cannot believe that you are familiar with my project for further Arctic work as formally presented to the American Geographical Society on the 12th of January, '97, & I therefore enclose copy of that project.

You will see from this that my plan contemplates "Scientific Explorations in the North of Greenland."

I still can hardly bring myself to believe that you propose to devote your time, energy, and money, in an attempt to anticipate or duplicate work which I proposed nearly a year ago, and the preparations for the execution of which are well under way.

I am sure you will pardon me if I remind you that such action on your part, in entering a field in which I have been at work for several years and assuming objects which I have formally proposed for my own work, will be without precedent in the entire annals of Arctic Exploration.

Very respectfully,

R. E. PEARY.

CAPTAIN OTTO SVERDRUP.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY OF TOULOUSE is organizing an Exhibition of Scientific Apparatus for the measurement of time and of angles according to the decimal system, to be held at Toulouse during the sitting of the XXXVIIth Congress of Learned Societies, from the 4th to the 8th of April, 1899.

The Exhibition will embrace : clocks, chronometers, watches, etc., showing decimal divisions of the day, the half-day, the hour, etc.; circles, compasses, sextants, etc., etc., decimally graduated, for the circle, the semi-circle, the quadrant, etc., etc.

There will be attached to the Exhibition a collection, as complete as possible, of the geographical maps, the tables of logarithms, the decimal astronomical tables and the various memoirs already published on this question.

THE SUPPLÉMENT to Vivien de Saint Martin and Rousselet's *Nouveau Dictionnaire de Géographie Universelle* is approaching completion. The *fascicules* 13 and 14, just issued, begin with KAARTA and end with MZAB.

The volume of the *Dictionnaire* covering the letters K-M is now ten years old, and the *Supplément* has to render an account of the names added to the map within that period of active exploration and occupation, without neglecting those previously recorded. To Klondike, a name of yesterday, are devoted four columns, to the German Colony of Kamerun eleven and to Madagascar thirteen columns.

No dictionary satisfies every demand, but the reader of the *Supplément* is surprised to find, under *Mexico*, a quotation from Elisée Reclus on the insalubrity of the capital, without a reference to the colossal drainage works completed in 1898.

THE ALMANACH DE GOTH, for 1899 (the 136th year), has a new section, containing the texts of the most important treaties concluded during the previous year: that between Germany and China relative to the cession of Kiau-Chou; the Russo-Japanese treaty recognizing the sovereignty and independence of Korea; and the preliminary treaty of peace between the United States and Spain.

Another notable addition to the body of statistical information in the *Almanach* is a list of the stations of the German and the French men-of-war throughout the world.

PROFESSOR J. C. BRANNER, of Leland Stanford, Jr., University, California, contributes to *Modern Language Notes*, Vol. XIV, No. 2, a paper on Some Old French Place Names in the State of Arkansas. These, he remarks, are confined chiefly to the southern and eastern parts of the State and to the valley of the Arkansas River.

The explanations offered are such as are suggested by the words themselves, or by some circumstance connected with the localities; but Prof. Branner, like every man who has been caught in the thicket of etymology, is constrained to admit that few of the explanations offered in his paper are to be accepted without question.

In many cases, the more the word is studied the greater the uncertainty as to its derivation. *Bodcaw*, for instance, the name of a stream and a township in Lafayette County, is readily accepted as a clerical error for the French *Badeau* (as if *Bodcau*), as the stream is called in Louisiana, until it is known that the stream flows into Lake Bodcau, and the reader is lost.

Add to the natural sources of confusion in the careless pronunciation of the ignorant, in misapprehension of sounds, in clerical error and hasty association, the pitfalls dug for themselves and for others by the learned, and the plain man may well give humble and hearty thanks that his ways are not as the ways of the etymologist.

Prof. Branner explains the name of the *Canadian* stream in this fashion:

Cañada (Spanish). Diminutive form of *cañon*, a steep-sided gorge.

The derivation is more than dubious, and in what Spanish grammar or dictionary is there found a diminutive in *ada*? Moreover, a word ending in a consonant loses no letter when the diminutive

ending is added; and the word *cañon* is itself an augmentative of the word *caño*, a tube or pipe.

Under *Dardanelle*, the name of a town on the Arkansas River, is the remark:

I do not know whether the name was imported from Europe, or, as is said of the European name, was derived directly from *dort d'un oeille*.

If such things are said, they should not be repeated. A man may make fritters of English and live, but it is not permitted to fly in the face of the French language and of common sense.

Mr. Robert T. Hill, of the U. S. Geological Survey, will address the Society on the 13th of March on the subject of Cuba: Its Resources and People.

The following Circular has been addressed to the Fellows of the Society:

AMERICAN GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY,

NO. 11 WEST 29TH STREET.

NEW YORK, February 28, 1899.

THE AMERICAN GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY has long been hindered and straitened in its work by the inadequacy of its house, No. 11 West 29th Street.

For many years the Society has been endeavoring to accumulate a fund for the purpose of procuring a fire-proof building. This fund grows very slowly, and is still \$75,000 or \$80,000 less than the sum needed.

Meanwhile the value of land advantageously situated increases rapidly, and the building now occupied by the Society (11 West 29th Street) grows more and more unsuitable and insufficient. It affords almost no accommodation for readers and students. It is not fire-proof. Its shelf-room is inadequate, so that the library, which has grown to be one of the most valuable geographical libraries in the world, is scattered on five floors and much of it is boxed up and inaccessible. The need for a new house is pressing and imperative, but at the present rate of progress it will be many years before the Society is able to obtain one.

Under these circumstances the Council have thought it possible that the Fellows of the Society, and others interested in the cause of science and education, might be willing to come to the aid of the Society and by contributing, say \$75,000, enable it to install itself suitably without delay.

Subscriptions of \$5,000, \$5,000, \$5,000, \$1,000, \$1,000, \$1,000, \$1,000, and \$250—amounting to \$19,250—have already been offered, and it is hoped that you may be inclined to lend your aid towards establishing the Society fittingly in a centre where all its resources may be brought to bear upon the broad field of usefulness before it, in generous rivalry with the well-housed and highly endowed Societies of other countries.

Should you think favorably of this suggestion, any contribution which you may make will be most thankfully received.

CHARLES P. DALY,
President.